

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /060 W  
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R 170828Z NOV 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2782

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

FBIS OKINAWA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 13440

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJ: PROVINCIAL FACTIONALISM AND "GANG OF FOUR" COLLABORATORS

REF: A. HONG KONG 13397, B. HONG KONG 13274, C. HONG KONG 12704,  
D. PEKING 2293

SUMMARY: THE NEW HUA LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO BE MOVING SLOWLY AND CAUTIOUSLY IN DEALING WITH PERSISTENT PROVINCIAL FACTIONAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE TARGETING OF THE FORMER ASSOCIATES OF THE "GANG OF FOUR." SUCH CAUTION MIGHT BE THE RESULT OF HUA KUO-FENG'S CONTINUED PRE-OCCUPATION WITH NATIONAL LEVEL POLITICAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE NEED TO BUILD A BROAD LEADERSHIP CONSENSUS. HOWEVER, A LONG DRAWN-OUT PROCESS OF CONSENSUS BUILDING WILL LIKELY COMPLICATE RATHER THAN RESOLVE LOCAL FACTIONAL PROBLEMS. END OF SUMMARY

1. DESPITE RELAXED ATTITUDES IN SOME AREAS TOWARD LEFTIST-

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ASSOCIATED CADRES EXPRESSED EARLIER (REF C), RECENT PROVINCIAL

BROADCASTS SUGGEST THAT POLITICAL FIGURES IN SOME PROVINCES MIGHT ALSO BE TARGETED FOR ATTACK AND POSSIBLE REMOVAL. DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS, MANY OF CHINA'S PROVINCES, INCLUDING FUKIEN, SHANSI, KWANGTUNG, CHEKIANG, KIANGSI AND HUNNAN (REF A, B), AMONG OTHERS, HAVE CITED THE "GANG OF FOUR" FOR INTERFERING IN PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS ON MANY OCCASIONS IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. SUCH CHARGES CLEARLY SUGGEST THAT THE "GANG OF FOUR" HAD PROVINCIAL-LEVEL COLLABORATORS TO CARRY OUT MOVES TO "ATTACK AND BRING DOWN" LOCAL FIGURES STANDING IN THE WAY OF "LEFTIST" DOMINATION. FOR INSTANCE, SPEECHES MADE AT A NOVEMBER 13 KIANGSI CRITICISM RALLY ATTACKED THE "GANG OF FOUR" FOR "POKING THEIR SINISTER NOSES" INTO KIANGSI AND COLLUDING WITH A "VERY TINY GROUP" OF PROVINCIAL CADRES TO "OPENLY SPLIT" THE PROVINCIAL PARTY COMMITTEE. THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTING TO REMOVE SEVERAL KEY INDIVIDUALS IN THE PROVINCE, AND THE CATALOGING OF THEIR CRIMES MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT THEY WILL BE DEALT WITH LENIENTLY. NO MENTION IS MADE OF THE PROSPECT FOR REFORM.

2. NEVERTHELESS, IDENTIFYING PROVINCIAL COLLABORATORS OF THE "GANG OF FOUR" (EXCEPT IN SHANGHAI) AND RESOLVING LONG-STANDING FACTIONAL DISPUTES HAS MOVED SLOWLY. SINCE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, FACTIONAL DISPUTES, PARTICULARLY IN FUKIEN, KIANGSI, AND CHEKIANG, SEEMED TO HAVE INVOLVED NAKED POWER STRUGGLES, RATHER THAN JOCKEYING OVER ISSUES. IN LARGE MEASURE, THESE WERE CONTESTS BETWEEN THE "INS" AND THE "OUTS"--STRUGGLES COMPOUNDED BY THE "GANG OF FOUR" IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO BUILD A PROVINCIAL POWER BASE. ISSUES, SUCH AS WAGE DISPUTES, TRANSPORTATION, AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION, ETC., WERE NOT ARGUED ON THEIR OWN MERITS, BUT BECAME ENTANGLED IN THE FACTIONAL QUAGMIRE.

3. IN ORDER FOR THE HUA LEADERSHIP TO RE-ASSERT CENTER AUTHORITY OVER THE PROVINCES, STERN MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN QUICKLY. A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO PROBLEMS LEADING TO A LONG DRAWN-OUT PROCESS OF CONSENSUS-BUILDING WILL LIKELY COMPLICATE ENTRENCHED FACTIONAL RIVALRIES AND FURTHER DISRUPT THE ALREADY CONFUSED PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY STRUCTURE. FAILURE TO ADDRESS LOCAL FACTIONALISM WOULD ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE REGIME IS DIVIDED AMONG ITSELF ON HOW TO SORT OUT OTHER CRUCIAL PROBLEMS--INCLUDING THE NEED TO FILL CENTER LEADERSHIP VACANCIES AND CALL NATIONAL MEETINGS TO RATIFY RECENT LEADERSHIP AND POLICY CHANGES. IT THIS  
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BECOMES APPARENT, IT COULD INDICATE THAT HUA OWES TOO MANY POLITICAL DEBTS, TO ACT QUICKLY AND DECISIVELY.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL STABILITY, PARTY LINE, POLITICAL LEADERS, DISSIDENT FACTIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 17 NOV 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** greeneet  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976HONGK13440  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760428-1010  
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**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 110  
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**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 HONG KONG 13397, 76 HONG KONG 13274, 76 HONG KONG 12704, 76 PEKING 2293  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** greeneet  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 26 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <26 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <16 SEP 2004 by greeneet>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PROVINCIAL FACTIONALISM AND "GANG OF FOUR"COLLABORATORS  
**TAGS:** PINT, CH  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006